

Message Text

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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 BONN 07246

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO, GW

SUBJECT: MBFR: INCREASINGLY CAUTIOUS FRG POLICY

BEGIN SUMMARY: AS THE PROSPECTS FOR MOVEMENT IN
MBFR IN THE LATE SUMMER OR FALL BECOME MORE FAVORABLE,
WE NOTE AN INCREASING CAUTION AMONG FRG OFFICIALS AS
THE TIME APPROACHES FOR TAKING HARD POLITICAL DECISIONS
ON GERMAN MBFR POLICY. RIGHTLY OR WRONGLY, THE FRG
FEARS THAT THE DISADVANTAGES FLOWING FROM AN MBFR
AGREEMENT WILL BE GREATER THAN THE PUTATIVE BENEFITS.
THE FRG IS NOT PRESENTLY SUBJECT TO THE SAME TYPE OF
POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PRESSURES AFFECTING OTHER WESTERN
ALLIES WHO HAVE A CORRESPONDINGLY GREATER INTEREST IN
MAKING PROGRESS IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. IT IS ANTICIPATED
THAT THE FRG WILL PROVE TO BE A HARD BARGAINER IN NATO

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IN DEVELOPING THE ALLIANCE POSITION ON THE INTRODUCTION

OF NUCLEAR ELEMENTS. WHILE HARD BARGAINING IS EXPECTED, WE NEVERTHELESS ANTICIPATE EVENTUAL GERMAN MINISTERIAL-LEVEL AGREEMENT TO THE INCLUSION OF NUCLEAR ELEMENTS. SHOULD THE SOVIETS REACT NEGATIVELY TO THE WESTERN NUCLEAR PACKAGE, THE FRG WILL THEN PROBABLY ADVOCATE A SCALE-BACK APPROACH IN LIEU OF UPPING THE NUCLEAR ANTE. END SUMMARY

1. ON MBFR THE FRG IS NOW CONSIDERING INDICATIONS THAT PROGRESS MAY BE MADE BEGINNING IN THE LATE SUMMER OR EARLY FALL ASSUMING CSCE COMES TO A SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION BEFOREHAND. THIS POSSIBILITY OF PROGRESS HAS OCCASIONED INCREASING CAUTION AMONG GERMAN OFFICIALS CONCERNED WITH MBFR POLICY AS THE TIME APPROACHES WHEN HARD POLITICAL DECISIONS MUST BE TAKEN. BESIDES THE QUESTION OF INCLUDING NUCLEAR ELEMENTS IN THE ALLIANCE POSITION, GERMAN POLICY MAKERS MIGHT--SOONER RATHER THAN LATER--HAVE TO COME TO GRIPS WITH SUCH ISSUES AS FIRST PHASE BUNDESWEHR REDUCTIONS, SIZE OF SUCH REDUCTIONS AND METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION. THE FORMAL AND INFORMAL EXCHANGES IN VIENNA HAVE MADE THE PITFALLS IN MBFR MORE OBVIOUS TO THE GERMANS. WHEREAS THE POSSIBLE ADVANTAGES OF AN MBFR AGREEMENT--SUCH AS A REDUCED THREAT OF MILITARY CONFRONTATION IN CENTRAL EUROPE--ARE STILL OF VITAL IMPORTANCE TO THE FRG, THE POSSIBLE DISADVANTAGES IN AN MBFR AGREEMENT NOW SEEM TO LOOM EVER LARGER IN GERMAN PERCEPTIONS.

2. PERHAPS THE PRINCIPAL DISADVANTAGE PERCEIVED IS A LIMITATION OF GERMAN SOVEREIGNTY VIA A NATIONAL SUBCEILING ON THE SIZE OF THE BUNDESWEHR. THIS ISSUE OF NATIONAL SUBCEILINGS HAS BEEN VIGOROUSLY FOUGHT THUS FAR BY THE FRG AND IS LIKELY TO REMAIN THE TOUCHSTONE OF GERMAN CONCERN ABOUT THE NEGOTIATIONS. LIMITED SOVEREIGNTY IS A PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE ISSUE IN A COUNTRY WHICH HAS ENJOYED SOVEREIGNTY NOW FOR ONLY TWO DECADES.

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THE CURRENT POLITICAL CLIMATE IN THE
FRG IS EXEMPLIFIED BY A CAUTIOUS, PRAGMATIC GOVERN-
MENTAL APPROACH DESIGNED TO CONSOLIDATE AND TO PRESERVE
WHAT HAS THUS FAR BEEN ACHIEVED. THE PREVAILING
ATMOSPHERE IS NOT CONDUCIVE TO A GERMAN INCLINATION TO
YIELD ON AN ISSUE OF SUCH POLITICAL MAGNITUDE.

3. CURRENT FRG MBFR POLICY MAKERS REALIZE FULL WELL THAT
THE CDU/CSU OPPOSITION IS MONITORING THE PROGRESS OF THE
NEGOTIATIONS, ALERT FOR ANY WEAKNESSES IN THE FRG
POSITION WHICH COULD BE USED FOR DOMESTIC POLITICAL GAIN.
THE IMPORTANCE WITH WHICH THE GOVERNMENT VIEWS THE CDU'S
THINKING ON SECURITY AND DEFENSE ISSUES WAS VIDIDLY
ILLUSTRATED ABOUT A MONTH AGO WHEN DEFENSE MINISTER LEBER
AGREED WITH CDU/CSU DEFENSE SPOKESMAN WOERNER NOT TO IMPL
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MENT THE "STANDBY READINESS" FORCE RESTRUCTURING OF THE
BUNDESWEHR UNTIL SUCH TIME AS "SATISFACTORY RESULTS" WERE ATTAINED IN

MBFR. OPPOSITION SKEPTICISM ABOUT ANY BENEFICIAL EFFECTS ACCRUING FROM THE TALKS FOR THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC REPRESENTS A POLITICAL FACTOR OF SOME SIGNIFICANCE WHICH UNDENIABLY INFLUENCES THE DEVELOPMENT OF FRG POLICY.

4. IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT THE BUNDESTAG WOULD APPROVE AN MBFR AGREEMENT WHICH PLACED A SPECIFIC CONTRACTUAL LIMITATION ON GERMAN MILITARY FORCES. THIS APPLIES ALSO TO THE QUESTION OF VERIFYING COMPLIANCE WITH AN AGREEMENT SHOULD IT INVOLVE THE PRESENCE OF SOVIET OBSERVERS IN THE FRG. THE GERMANS HAVE RESISTED AND ARE LIKELY TO CONTINUE TO RESIST ANY SCHEME WHICH COULD BE VIEWED AS BLATANT SOVIET INTERFERENCE IN GERMAN AFFAIRS. ANY GOVERNMENT WHICH AGREED TO INTRUSIVE VERIFICATION PROCEDURES ON GERMAN TERRITORY WOULD COME UNDER HEAVY FIRE IN THE BUNDESTAG.

5. THE FRG, UNLIKE ITS FELLOW WESTERN EUROPEAN PARTICIPANTS IN THE TALKS, IS UNDER NEITHER FINANCIAL NOR PUBLIC OPINION PRESSURE TO REDUCE ITS MILITARY FORCES. ON THE CONTRARY, THE FRG IS THE STRONGEST FINANCIAL AND CONVENTIONAL MILITARY POWER IN WESTERN EUROPE, AND THE GERMANS GIVE EVERY INDICATION OF BEING ABLE TO MAINTAIN THEIR POSITION. FOR EXAMPLE, ALL POLITICAL PARTIES JOINED FORCES IN SUPPORTING THE GOVERNMENT'S RECENT DEFENSE BUDGET PROPOSAL. THE GOVERNMENT'S REQUEST FOR 32 BILLION DM WAS PASSED UNANIMOUSLY IN THE BUNDESTAG. IT WAS NOTEWORTHY THAT EVEN LEFT-LEANING SPD PARTY MEMBERS WHO HAD VOTED AGAINST SUCH APPROPRIATIONS OR ABSTAINED IN THE PAST CAST THEIR VOTES IN FAVOR THIS TIME.

6. ANOTHER IMPORTANT FACTOR IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FRG'S MBFR POLICY WILL BE ITS PERCEPTION OF THE USG'S NEED TO STAVE OFF UNILATERAL FORCE REDUCTIONS WHICH CONGRESS HAS FLIRTED WITH IMPOSING SINCE 1971. GERMAN CONCERN ABOUT THIS THREAT BECOMING REALITY SEEMS TO HAVE RECEDED DURING THE PAST YEAR. WE NOTE

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THAT RECENT DISCUSSIONS WITH AMERICAN CONGRESSMEN IN VIENNA MADE EVIDENT TO EASTERN AND WESTERN NEGOTIATORS THAT CONGRESSIONAL ACTION TO REDUCE U.S. FORCES WAS STILL A POSSIBILITY. HOWEVER, IT IS NOT YET CLEAR WHAT IMPACT SUCH DISCUSSIONS WILL HAVE IN BONN. WE WOULD EXPECT THAT THE UPCOMING NATO SUMMIT AND THE PRESENCE OF PRESIDENT FORD WOULD REINFORCE THE GERMAN BELIEF THAT THE AMERICAN COMMITMENT TO EUROPE--AS EXEMPLIFIED BY U.S. FORCE LEVELS--REMAINS STRONGER THAN

EVER.

7. WHEN THE U.S. INTRODUCES THE NUCLEAR PACKAGE INTO THE NAC, WE ANTICIPATE THAT THE FRG WILL BE ONE OF THE HARDEST BARGAINERS WITH WHICH THE USG WILL HAVE TO CONTEND IN HAMMERING OUT THE DETAILS OF THE ALLIANCE POSITION. WHILE THE BARGAINING MAY BE HARD, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THE GERMANS WILL CARRY THEIR OPPOSITION TO THE POINT OF BLOCKING THE INTRODUCTION OF WESTERN NUCLEAR ELEMENTS INTO THE LKS. WE BELIEVE THAT THE TRILATERAL CONSULTATIONS WITH THE GERMANS AND BRITISH HAVE ALREADY PLAYED AN INVALUABLE ROLE IN GAINING EVENTUAL GERMAN

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MINISTERIAL-LEVEL AGREEMENT TO THE U.S. INITIATIVE.
MOREOVER, THE FRG SEEMS TO BE INTERESTED IN FINDING OUT
WHAT THE INTRODUCTION OF NUCLEAR ELEMENTS WILL BUY FROM
THE EASTERN SIDE. THE GERMANS HAVE CONTINUED TO STRESS
THAT THE PRINCIPAL USE OF THE NUCLEAR ELEMENTS SHOULD
BE TO OBTAIN SOVIET AGREEMENT TO THE CONCEPT OF THE
COMMON CEILING IN GROUND FORCE MANPOWER. THE GERMANS
HOLD FIRMLY TO THEIR BELIEF THAT ONLY THROUGH SOVIET
ACCEPTANCE OF SUCH A COMMON CEILING WOULD THE MBFR
NEGOTIATIONS LEAD TO A POLITICALLY AND MILITARILY
SIGNIFICANT AGREEMENT IN THE WESTERN INTEREST.

8..AFTER DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATO POSITION ON INCLUSION
OF THE NUCLEAR ELEMENTS AHD ITS PRESENTATION TO THE
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EAST, THE GERMANS WILL WANT TO GIVE A
CAREFUL, CONSIDERED REACTION TO THE SOVIET RESPONSE.
SHOULD THE SOVIET REACTION BE NEGATIVE OR DEMAND THE
INCLUSION OF ADDITIONAL WESTERN NUCLEAR ELEMENTS, WE
BELIEVE THE FRG WOULD THEN CALL FOR A REVIEW OF THE
ALLIANCE APPROACH AND WOULD ADVOCATE THE DEVELOPMENT
NUCLEAR ANTE. SUCH AN APPROACH WOULD BE CONSISTENT
WITH THE VIEWS ALLEGEDLY HELD AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS
OF THE FRG WHICH CONSIDER THE CURRENT WESTERN ASYMMETRICAL
APPROACH TOO COMPLEX AND TOO UNFAVORABLE FOR THE
EAST TO BE ACCEPTABLE. INSTEAD, A SCALE-BACK APPROACH
CALLING FOR SMALLER REDUCTIONS SPREAD OVER A LONGER
PERIOD OF TIME DOVETAILS NICELY WITH THE GERMAN INTEREST
IN MAINTAINING THE CURRENT RELATIVELY STABLE MILITARY
SITUATION IN CENTRAL EUROPE.
HILLENBRAND

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